

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A hard boiled candy composition comprising:
  - (a) a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition;
  - (b) at least one botanical selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof, each having an unpleasant mouthfeel in the form of a tingling sensation or astringency characteristic of said group of botanicals; and,
  - (c) an amount of from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition of an unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent for suppressing the tingling sensation or astringency characteristic of said group of botanicals, said unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent consisting of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats, said amount being effective to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said group of botanicals.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently amended) The hard boiled candy composition according to claim ~~2~~1 wherein the botanical is Echinacea.
4. (Previously presented) The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is selected from the group consisting of cottonseed, soybean, peanut, palm, sunflower seed and corn oil and combinations thereof.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Previously presented) The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.5% to 3.5% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition.

7. (Previously presented) The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.75% to 3.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition.

8. (Previously presented) The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from about 1:1 to about 1/0.1.

9. (Previously presented) The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 8 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated oil to the botanical is from 1.0/0.6 to 1.0/0.15.

10. – 27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously presented) A method for suppressing the unpleasant mouthfeel of a hard boiled candy composition which contains a botanical having an unpleasant mouthfeel, which comprises:

(a) providing a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition and a botanical selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof, each having an unpleasant mouthfeel in the form of a tingling sensation or astringency characteristic of said group of botanicals, and,

(b) adding thereto from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition of an unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent for suppressing the tingling sensation or astringency characteristic of said group of botanicals, said unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent consisting of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats said amount being effective to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said group of botanicals.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently amended) The method according to claim ~~29~~28 wherein the botanical is Echinacea.

31. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 28 wherein the partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is selected from the group consisting of cottonseed, soybean, peanut, palm, sunflower seed and corn oil, and mixtures thereof.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 28 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.5% to 3.5% by weight of the hard boiled candy composition.

34. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 33 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.75% to 3.0% by weight of the hard boiled candy composition.

35. (Original) The method according to claim 28 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from about 1/1 to about 1/0.1.

36. (Original) The method according to claim 35 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from 1.0/0.6 to 1.0/0.15.

Claims 37 – 54. (Cancelled)

55. (Previously presented) A hard boiled candy composition consisting essentially of:  
(a) a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition;  
(b) at least one botanical selected from the group consisting of Echinacea, Siberian

Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian and Ephedra, and combinations thereof, each having an unpleasant mouthfeel in the form of a tingling sensation or astringency characteristic of said group of botanicals; and

(c) an unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent for suppressing the tingling sensation or astringency characteristic of said group of botanicals, said unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent consisting of from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said hard boiled candy composition of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats, said amount being effective to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said group of botanicals.

56. (Previously presented) The hard boiled candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the saturated fat is selected from the group consisting of palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, and butter and combinations thereof.

57. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 28 wherein the saturated fat is selected from the group consisting of palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, and butter and combinations thereof.

58. (New) The hard boiled candy composition of claim 1, wherein the hard boiled candy composition contains no botanical other than Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian, Ephedra, or combinations thereof.

59. (New) The hard boiled candy composition of claim 55, wherein the hard boiled candy composition contains no botanical other than Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian, Ephedra, or combinations thereof.